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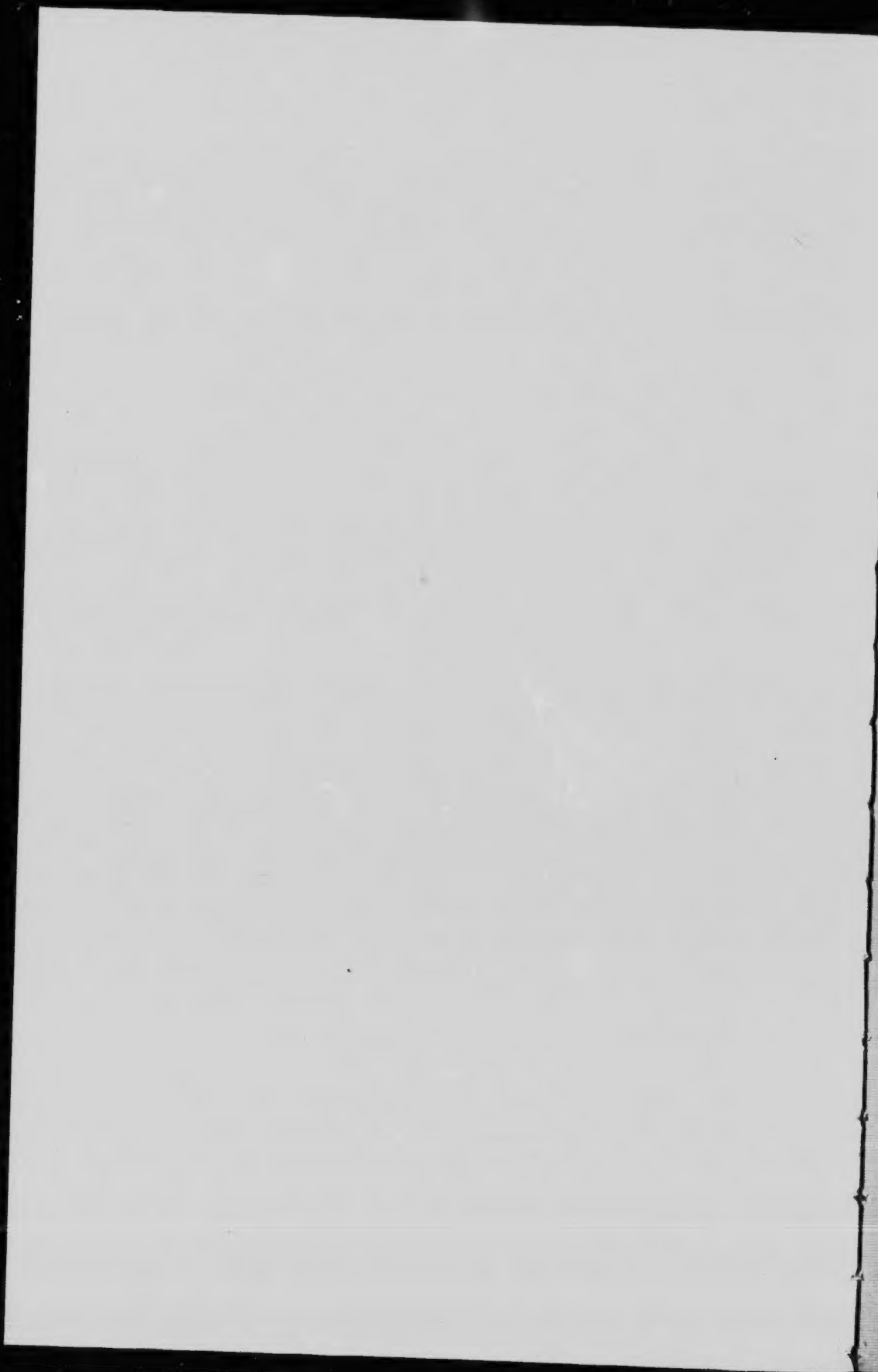
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With the Compliments
OF
R. E. GOSNELL

Who was requested to furnish
the Macaulay Club with a
copy of his Address at the last
Annual Banquet held in Chat-
ham on the evening of March
10th, 1919, and who trusts
that copies of the same in
printed form will be appre-
ciated by the members.

Ottawa, February 1st
1920

H.

PN4185

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*Mr. President and Members of the
Macaulay Club:*

It is about 35 or 36 years since I attended the first banquet of the Macaulay Club, and as I have never attended one since, you will realize what a pleasure it is, as William Tell would have said to his native mountains, to be with you once again, and how I have to thank you for the privilege. As a matter of fact I do not know very well how your committee of management could have done otherwise than have invited me in the circumstances, because as soon as I thought that there would be a fair possibility of my being in Ottawa during this winter, I wrote to Mr. Scullard to say that I would like to attend the next annual meeting. What could you do but make the best of it? Or give your poor old father the go by. I was glad to know that you still preserve a strong sense of filial duty and was prepared to do the proper thing. If, however, the proposer of this toast was at all sincere in his remarks and was expressing your real feelings—and I have not the remotest idea that he was not—I have a right to assume that I am entirely welcome. There is such a thing as being hungry for old friends as well as for a square meal—I could have had the latter at Ottawa—and I came all the way from the Capital to have that longing appeased. I could have stood to-night at the window and watched you through the window eating and still have gone away happy even at that, without the meal. I'm not knocking the meal.

Through the kindness of your secretary I have from time to time been favored with programmes of the seasonal work and menus of your banquets, and I know that I have to address an aggregation of what we call in the West "highbrows". I shall not, therefore, attempt to cope with you in your intellectual endeavours, but simply talk to you about something which I know and understand, and regarding which there can be no philosophical speculation. I like to talk about the Macaulay Club, because I had something to do with starting it, and because it is one of the few things which I helped to start that kept on going.

I have a very distinct recollection of the first banquet. It was in the Grand Central Hotel, kept by Mine Host, Dick Northwood. If Dick were here he would be grateful to me for mentioning it. As Secretary, I had a good deal to do with the arrangements. H. A. Patteson, Mayor of the City, and a prominent business man of the community, presided, and among those who were present and made speeches were: C. J. O'Neill, Thomas O'Hagan, Harry Pennefather, W. E. Rispin, Thos. Scullard, John Reeve, Fred Stone, and Dr. T. K. Holmes and Judge Woods, the two latter being our invited guests. We had a very good time indeed. There were certain items on the bill of fare on that occasion which I note to-night are conspicuous by their absence. Without indicating what these now traditional features of entertainment were, I may say that whether they helped to stimulate the flow of soul or not, at least the speeches were of a high order and scintillated with many bright and witty things. I remember Dr. Holmes, who I am delighted to see here to-night, coming to me the next day and in his kind, admonitory—I shall not say his professional—way, expressing his regret that, while he thoroughly enjoyed himself, an association of such fine, intellectual and promising young men should not have got along without such doubtful adventitious aids to eloquence. He did not lecture me. Professional men do not lecture without a fee. About ten days later, Judge Woods met me and he expressed similar sentiments. He told me that when he got home very late, or rather very early, his wife, on account of the odour of tobacco clinging to him, shooed him from the room and next morning made him hang his dress clothes in the back yard, where they still were and still redolent of the noxious fumes. At two o'clock a.m., the banquet broke up and at that hour it was just barely possible to discern your *vis-a-vis* through the smoke. No one was the worse for wear, but one gentleman, still a bright and shining light in the Macaulay firmament, upon reaching the sidewalk, experienced a reaction from the atmosphere of the banquetting room and leaned up against a telegraph pole, not for support, but just to enable him the better to reconnoitre the situation. He fixed his gaze upon a gas lamp at the corner opposite Jim Holmes' bookstore, which seemed to him to be revolving in an eccentric orb. Finally he said most

solemnly to me, at the same time pointing his index finger in the direction of the light: "That's a d—d ignis fatuus." Instead, sir, of that occasion having proved the young man's ruin, I have been informed on the most unimpeachable authority that in all the thirty-five years since, he has never again in the slightest degree been deceived by appearances on a similar or any other occasion, and now I am assured that, especially under existing conditions of public safety, he is entirely out of danger of a recurrence of aberrant illusions.

The genesis of the Macaulay Club has, I understand, been the subject of some dispute, and as, in that matter, I should be regarded as one of the greatest of living authorities, I shall proceed to revelations, so to speak. It happened thus wise. Mr. W. K. Merrifield and myself had been members of a debating society in Louisville—not in Kentucky—and it had been quite a success, our giants engaging in contests with Kent Bridge, Northwood and Thamesville giants. Once, a long time ago, when I was editor of the Planet, I suggested to Mr. Merrifield that we should organize a similar society in Chatham, and you must understand that it is a much bigger undertaking to do that kind of thing in a large community like Chatham, where intelligence and debating talent are not so conspicuous, as in smaller communities. I discussed the matter with Mr. Scullard and one or two others and we called a small, but very select meeting in the Planet sanctum, and if my memory does not play me tricks, those present were Thos. Scullard, now dean of the faculty; Harry Pennefather, J. F. Williamson, John Reeve, George Douglas, Jr., W. K. Merrifield and myself. There could not have been any more, because there was not chairs and table room for more. It was unanimously decided that a society such as we had in mind should be formed, and the only question at issue was the name. A number of names was suggested—Bacon, Burke, Shakespeare, Macaulay and others. Perhaps Mr. Scullard will remember who had the honour of suggesting Macaulay—certainly not I—but Macaulay it was after long and most earnest deliberation and discussion, and Macaulay in accomplishments, in literature and oratory perhaps best personified the standards we sought to reach. A number of likely persons were canvassed and a general meeting was called in the law office of Mr. Wm. Douglas, at

which there was a goodly attendance. C. J. O'Neill was elected president, and myself as secretary, and so the famous organization was set on foot, and here you are to-night, alive, kicking and still going strong.

If my memory serves me right, we met for some time in Douglas's office; but later with perhaps more enterprise than resources, we furnished a room over Atkinson & Rispin's office, and I do not know that until this day all the furniture and rent have been paid for. When I left in 1883—I was president that year—we had the Board of Trade—which, by the way, I promoted and of which I was secretary—as a sub-tenant. I noted in an article in the Canadian Courier by our friend Victor Lauriston, some reference to the sheriff having fallen heir to our possessions and to the Club since having led a sort of fugitive existence quite in keeping with Bohemian traditions. I once made up my mind that if ever I got into the millionaire or near-millionaire class I would endow the Club with a permanent home—and I have several times been on the verge of that opportunity—but I would not advise you to undertake any serious responsibilities in the meantime based on that hope. Before I leave the subject of rooms, I might refer to my last associations with them. A few days before I left for British Columbia, I was in the Planet sanctum one afternoon. A boy came and told me I was wanted at the Board of Trade rooms—I supposed on some business—and to come at once. When I arrived, I found the room filled with members of the Board of Trade and Macaulay Club. Mr. Alfred Craddock stepped up to me and after a few words presented me with a pocket book, which I afterwards discovered contained real money. I was so overcome with surprise and emotion I was utterly unable to say a word, and I take this, the first suitable opportunity since, to express my sincere appreciation and thanks. If it had not been for what was referred to as that "slight token of esteem," I do not know how I should have got to Vancouver and kept my family from starving in the meantime. Walking was far from being good in those days. You will, therefore, not be surprised at my good intentions towards the Club in the way of a home. I have, however, erected a good many beautiful edifices in my time—Castilian castles—and still have them, and I have already provided in my will that you shall have the very finest in my

repertoire, free of succession dues and all legal encumbrances.

I should like to say a few words about some of the pioneer members, now no longer with you. The very first I shall mention is the late C. J. O'Neill, one of the most gifted and erudite of Chatham's citizens. He possessed a fine judicial mind, a kind, generous Irish heart and, incidentally, a rich brogue. He was literary rather than commercial in his instincts, with a rare familiarity with and love of the classics. Every night of his life to the very last, he would read a chapter or two of a Greek or Latin author, or of both, and he could do what but few classical scholars can do—he could think in and carry on a conversation in these languages. He belonged to a family splendidly endowed. His eldest brother, James, a teacher, was widely read in literature, had a keen sense of humor, more spontaneous than Mark Twain's, scintillated with wit and could have written in the pages of the Immortals. His youngest brother was an artist of great promise. All three could have gained distinction, but were cut off in comparative youth with the same dread disease. I was in Chatham early in 1902 on a flying visit and saw C. J. in bed, distorted and drawn with rheumatism, and a mere skeleton of his former self, but he talked with me for an hour on his favorite topics. He talked as Plato might have talked. I read in the newspaper of his death on my way back to British Columbia. O'Neill had an eccentric manner and often an abstracted air about him that at times was very amusing. On one of my hurry-up trips to Chatham while East, I called at his office. As I entered, a client was going out. He was seated at his desk with his head bowed gazing intently at nothing. I advanced and said "How do you do, O'Neill?" He looked up quickly and then resumed his stare. For what seemed a minute there was a dead silence and in my embarrassment I was about to beat a retreat. Of a sudden he raised his head and with a most welcome smile blurted out: "Gosnell, old man, I'm glad to see you." He relapsed into another spell of abstraction and then, again, suddenly, jumping up: "Let's have a grog." We adjourned to the Garner House, where he talked like an oracle inspired. Then there was Thos. O'Hagan, principal of the Separate School, predecessor of W. P. Killackey, another member of the Club, a dear, delightful fellow,

the local silver-tongued orator of the Conservatives, O'Hagan was in a sense *sui generis*. Besides being a teacher, he wrote prose and poetry, with a preference for the latter, and dabbled, may I say, in elocution. What he wrote was always bright, but never profound, and somewhat given to extravagance and ornateness of style. His poetry sometimes ran riot in odd similes and mixed metaphors, but possessed some stanzas that had all the purity and melody of Moore, whom he would like to have me believe he excelled. He came frequently to see me in my room or office after hours and would invariably regale me with demonstrations of tones in *"orotundo profundo"* or with the tintinabulations of the bells or recite passages from his latest verse or improvise an oration, say, on Home Rule or try himself out on Shakespeare. One day he held up his well-groomed hands and asked me if they were not beautifully molded. I said in desperation: "O'Hagan, you will pardon me, but you're the most conceited man I have ever met." He laughed and replied "You're probably right, old man. We're all conceited one way or another, more or less; but mine is an *honest* conceit." Which reminds me of something in Haliburton's Sam Slick series. Sam Slick was one of the wandering clock makers or tinkers whom Haliburton was fond of entertaining. In one of the evenings which lasted usually into the small hours, they had their usual discussions on the relative merits and respective peculiarities of the British and Yankees, Haliburton said: "The trouble with you Yankees is, you are so conceited and blow so about everything." "Wall, Jedge," replied Sam, "We *air* conceited, but so *air* everybody else. They've *jest* different ways of showing it. We Yankees get on the housetops and perclaim that we *air* the greatest nation on earth. You Britisher fellows *jest* look and feel it." In this connection, coming back to our old friend O'Neill, he caught up with me one night coming from a meeting of the Separate School Board on our way home, and in the course of a promiscuous conversation he suddenly asked me "What do you think of O'Hagan?" who was evidently on his mind. I said he must know him a great deal better than I did and that I would rather hear his own opinion. After a very long pause, he expressed himself in language that could not have been more significant:

"Will, it's O'Haygan, O'HAYGAN, and nothing but O'HAYGAN."

I have mentioned Judge Woods. He was not a member, but keenly interested in our work and a sincere well-wisher. Woods was a gentleman of the old school, not very learned as a judge, but widely read, an easy, agreeable speaker, and always courtly in manner and conversation. There were two things in which he was pre-eminently and many years ahead of his time—and you must remember that he belonged to the first generation of Chathamites. His brother Joseph represented the district in the old Parliament of Canada, about 1844, and the judge himself has told me that he attended the Assize Courts at London and Sandwich in winter time, travelling there and back on skates, with his blue bag of books slung over his shoulder, a sort of travelling law library. He was an ardent advocate of prohibition and good roads, two things which you will have to admit are very much to the fore at the present moment. W. K. Merrifield, one of the twain in whose vision the Macaulay Club was first perceived *in nubibus*, and whom we sometimes dubbed "Old Hickory," was by many regarded as rather a dry stick, but he possessed a wonderful stock of information—a veritable encyclopedia of facts and figures, and regarding the American Civil War, in which he fought on the side of the North, he knew every smallest detail of every campaign and every battle. Like the village schoolmaster, with us who had his measure, the wonder always grew how one small head could carry all he knew. Very few of you will remember J. F. Williamson, a one-time schoolmate of mine, on account of whom I had for a long period the highest hopes, and insofar as indications of intellect and physique were concerned, he should have climbed a long way up the ladder. He was a law student in the office of Wilson, Rankin and McKeough, practised for a time in Chatham and migrated to Texas and back, and then to Seattle and later San Francisco, where he changed his profession to that of mining engineer. As I happen to know, he did not come up to my ardent expectations, not on account of vicious habits or lack of industry or ability, but from sheer temperamental inability to fit in with his human environment. I once told him that he was born several hundred years too late and that he should have been an Oriental potentate, who could have

enjoyed the diversion of cutting off the heads of a dozen or two of his retainers every morning before breakfast. I had the unique distinction, I believe, of being the only person he never permanently fell out with. Incidentally, he married one of the Moore sisters, of Chatham, who were accomplished musicians. An erstwhile partner of his in Seattle was Harry Pennefather, a native of Chatham, and the son of Mr. Pennefather, a long time Collector of Customs at this port. Pennefather was as handsome as Apollo and physically in the same class, who once or twice as a member of the famous rowing quartette—Billy Wells, Ed. Van Allan, Harry Ball and Harry Pennefather—helped to bring renown to Chatham by winning the international championship. Pennefather had a wonderfully quick and receptive mind, and just before his last law examination, having largely neglected studies for more pleasurable pursuits, shut himself up for two months and read the entire course prescribed and passed the mark an easy winner. He used to at intervals of relaxation recite to me whole chapters of Somebody on Torts and Chitty on Contracts after a single reading. He reminded me much of the great Alexander Hamilton, an eminent lawyer and one of the Fathers of the American Republic, who qualified for law in eleven or sixteen weeks, I forget which. He fell into a law practise quickly in Seattle during one of its recurrent booms and prospered like the proverbial green bay tree, and was exceedingly popular. Financial depression following on the heels of inflation, he became involved financially and went to Mexico, where his wife afterwards joined him, to renew his fortunes. I have always expected to see him emerge some day as a Mexican grandee, but his subsequent lot in life is unknown to me, as well as to all his friends. Fate seems to have suddenly eclipsed a career that promised to be brilliant. His brother-in-law, Alfred Craddock, though not active, was a member also. He was one of nature's noblemen, with a fine sense of honour and social ethics, one of the most respected of Chatham's young men. Scarcely had he been well launched as a member of the old firm of Scane, Houston and Craddock, than his life was cut short. Craddock was responsible for inciting one of my few original jokes, which might be good enough to bear repeating here. When my little girl, now married in Vancouver, was born, her mother was at her home in

Port Hope. I received a telegram one day stating that mother and daughter were well, and I put the usual notice in the paper that afternoon. Next morning going to the office I met Craddock going to his and he said: "Old man, I suppose I must congratulate you," and added rather seriously, "but you made a *great* mistake." Though he was always genial, he was never frivolous, and I anxiously asked: "Why, what's the matter?" "It's a girl." "Oh," I shot back, greatly relieved and from pure force of habit as a newspaperman, "Correct that next issue." Fred Stone, now a judge somewhere in Ontario, became a member of Craddock's firm. He spoke with much deliberation, a little hesitatingly, but with precision and always, I was going to say, dogmatically. There was never any doubt about what he believed to be true. His father, Thos. Stone, was for half a century the leading dry goods merchant of Chatham. There was John Reeve, for a long time in Lawyer Pegley's office, quietly studious and a fair speaker. Geo. Douglas, jr., son of Wm. Douglas, K.C., Crown Attorney, the portly and courtly doyen of the Kent Bar, had inherited some of the qualities of his strenuous Highland forefathers. Of ardent temperament, somewhat impetuous and excitable, he exhibited many flashes of brilliancy, and I often thought he would eventually turn his spasmodic energies to good account when he got down out of the clouds to solid earth, but I have lost all sight or sound of him.

There is just one more of the original group of Macaulayites to whom I shall refer. I do not remember his Christian name, but his other name was Cox, member of a London law firm, who was for some time in Chatham as solicitor for the Erie and Huron Loan and Savings Co. He gave everything but the impression of possessing genius, quite the contrary. Dudishly attired, with low, retreating forehead, long nose and face, sunken eyes, mournful expression, protruding lips, weak chin, and whitish complexion, first sight almost excited contempt for his personality. The first time I saw him, in Christ Church, at an Easter morning service, I thought he was congenitally—well, that there was not there a *mens sana in corpore sano* and when I saw him put a five-dollar bill on the collection plate I was more or less confirmed in my opinion; but as a matter of fact, he turned out to be the very antithesis of all I had diagnosed

al him to be. I have never met a man before or since so gifted as he was in many ways. To start with, he was a first class lawyer. He had an excellent academical training, possessed a most familiar and discriminating knowledge of literature, had a wit as nimble as Voltaire's, wrote exquisite satires in prose and poetry, was versed in history and philosophy, played and composed music, and as a crowning accomplishment was a finished artist in black and white effects. Some of his caricatures and cartoons would have been worthy of the old Punch masters, and his drawing was of the most refined type and technically classic in detail. Cox presided at some of our meetings as a critic, and once or twice read papers that might have been contributed by Charles Lamb, the prince of all essayists, or de Quincey. After I went to B.C., I had a number of letters from him, in one of which he informed me that he was going to take Holy Orders and bury himself somewhere in the wilds of Northern Ontario as a missionary among the Indians. I wrote protesting against giving up his pursuits in art and literature which would be destined to enrich our stock as Canadians. He wrote back saying that his tendency to humorous portrayal, something that was almost irresistible on his part, was sinful and the inspiration of the Devil, and he exhorted me, so far as all secular literature was concerned, to flee from the wrath to come. Of such stuff are martyrs made. I even hoped that, with a conscience as tender as John Bunyan's, with possibly equal powers of Allegory, he at least might in time undertake some religious work as great as Pilgrim's Progress, but I have never heard of or from him since. If Cox saved his soul by renunciation, Canada certainly through it lost the possibility of an outstanding figure in her literary and artistic life, whose extraordinary talents would have made his name resplendent and enhanced our status in a world in which we have been somewhat lower than the angels of other countries. I would not like to convey the impression that there was a fatality associated with membership in the Macaulay Club, but it does appear as a tragedy to me that so many of our members so splendidly endowed never reached a stage in the journey in life at all within sight of the goal of a youthful and justifiable ambition.

Mr. Scullard, and some others here, will probably remember several ambitious efforts outside of the de-

bating arena. We got up a dress conversazione in the skating rink. It was quite successful as a social event, but as we employed an orchestra, of Detroit, one of the second or third in standing in the United States, we called down on our head a heavy fire of criticism for not having employed local talent instead. On another occasion, Hamlet was produced in Scane's opera house under our auspices. The costumes, which were quite elaborate and effective, were likewise imported from Detroit. Frank Moore, brother of the Moore sisters already referred to, made a splendid Hamlet. James McColl took the combined parts of Polonius and Horatio. My wife was Ophelia. I, the lean and hungry Cassius of those days, was the ghost, and I don't remember the rest of the caste. The house was crowded and at least the Planet, of which I was editor, voted it a success.

From the first, we had outlined a programme of local historical research as part of the objects of the Club, and the constitution and by-laws made provision for it. I remember preparing a circular letter which was quite generally circulated throughout the county of Kent, asking for contributions of interest in the way of reminiscences, old letters, photographs, diaries, documents, files of newspapers, clippings, etc., but no one seemed to be in the slightest bit interested and so far as I know we did not get a single response. We did, however, have the honour of becoming affiliated with the Royal Society of Canada, a somewhat empty honour as it turned out to be. Indirectly, it did have important results so far as the province of B.C. was concerned. When I became Librarian of the Provincial Library, which I was appointed to establish, the interest in historical work which had been aroused in Chatham induced me to make a special effort in what was practically a virgin field, along similar lines as we had attempted here, and when I ceased to be Librarian and Archivist, some years later, the work was carried on by my successor with much larger financial resources at his disposal than I had had. To-day, B.C. has the finest and most complete collection of Western Americana in the world. Outside of French Canada, perhaps, there has been more interest manifested in historical reminiscence and more material of a local character collected than elsewhere in the Dominion. Of later years, the spirit of historical research has spread generally throughout Canada and I was very

glad to learn that Kent was not behind in that respect. Dr. Holmes was kind enough to send me one or two publications of the Kent Historical Society, which I read with the greatest of interest. The work, while it may be regarded as faddy and in the category of numismatics and "bugology," is of great importance to us as a nation. When Canada ceases to forget its traditions, the efforts of her pioneers and the conditions under which they labored to make possible what we enjoy to-day, then she will have parted with an asset of inestimable value in directing the destinies of a country, great in possibilities, it is true, but whose course in the future is beset with many dangers. When we forget the religion of work, of honest service, of thrift, of endurance in well-doing, of those public and private rights for which our fathers fought, of independence of spirit and self-reliance, and of loyalty to our country and Empire, then we shall let go our sheet anchor and drive before the wind without a rudder. To-day we are threatened with dangers of which we did not dream of as imminent four years ago and the public mind is being distracted and disturbed by conflicting forces and tendencies, at the bottom of which, if carefully analyzed, are, in the main, loose thinking, confused moral perceptions and intense class selfishness. We must get back to sane methods of thought and honest work. We must begin again to steer by the light that led our Canadian ancestry in the direction of a sure goal, or there may come a catastrophe greater than the French Revolution, because, like the war, it will be world-wide in its nature.

I must conclude and thank you for coupling my name along with the toast of the Club. It is an honour I shall always remember and appreciate and I wish the Club success during all our own lives and success continued long after we have ceased to take an earthly interest in its last purposes and its present bright prospects.

